

Department of Workforce Development  
Secretary's Office  
201 East Washington Avenue  
P.O. Box 7946  
Madison, WI 53707-7946  
Telephone: (608) 266-3131  
Fax: (608) 266-1784  
Email: sec@dwd.wisconsin.gov



---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, April 9, 2013

CONTACT: DWD Communications, 608-266-2722

On the Web: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwd/news.htm>

On Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/WIWorkforce>

On Twitter: @WIWorkforce

## **DWD Secretary Announces Initiative to Promote Apprenticeship as Proven Means to Address Skills Gap, Fill Employers' Needs**

*Secretary Newson joins regional partners to roll out statewide effort to encourage employers, Wisconsinites to consider apprenticeship as effective means to cultivate skilled workers, develop the state's workforce*

SUSSEX – Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson today announced the launch of a statewide education and outreach initiative to boost employer and job seeker participation in Wisconsin Apprenticeship, a program that has produced skilled workers to meet employers' needs for more than a century.

"Wisconsin's first-in-the-nation apprenticeship program has been a key component of the state's workforce strategy since 1911 and has adapted over time to meet changing industry needs," Secretary Newson said. "Today we are issuing a call to action for employers to consider apprenticeship as a way to fill their need for highly skilled and well trained workers, and we urge individuals to consider this program as a pathway to a good-paying career."

Highlights of the statewide outreach effort include:

- A "toolkit" of updated brochures, folders and educational materials for regional representatives to provide directly to employers explaining how apprenticeship can provide them with well-trained and loyal workers, which can make their businesses more productive.
- An educational video that speaks directly to employers about the benefits of apprenticeship with a brochure titled *The Top 10 Reasons to Train Apprentices*.
- Postcards, display ads for online and print that convey the value of Apprenticeship to employers.
- Outdoor ads targeting potential apprentices that will be on four billboards along highways in the Milwaukee, Madison, Wausau and Green Bay/Fox Valley regions during the month of May.
- Public-service announcements that inform audiences about the benefits of apprenticeship to both employers and potential apprentices.

Quad/Graphics Executive Vice President of Manufacturing Operations Thomas Frankowski joined Secretary Newson at today's announcement. Mr. Frankowski noted that Quad/Graphics has benefited greatly since the company began training industrial maintenance apprentices since 2002.

"Quad/Graphics is as challenged as any other manufacturer out there to find quality, skilled individuals to support our business, particularly when it comes to electrical and mechanical maintenance," said Frankowski. "The apprenticeship program Wisconsin supports fills that gap, providing a great opportunity for us to nurture people who not only want to learn a trade on-the-job but also want to continue to work for Quad/Graphics well after they've graduated. The program has worked exceedingly well at helping us grow top-quality talent from within."

Also joining Secretary Newson were leaders from the Wisconsin Technical College System, which provides apprenticeship instruction, as well as the Wisconsin Apprenticeship Advisory Council, which advises on policies and best practices to keep Wisconsin's apprenticeship strong and adaptable to evolving industry needs.

As an employer-sponsored training program, apprenticeship combines on-the-job training with a journeyworker tailored to employers' specific skills needs, and classroom instruction, often at a technical college.

Apprentices are enrolled for four to five years, increasing their wages as their skills develop. Apprentices graduate from the apprenticeship program with a nationally-recognized credential, providing employers with a highly-skilled, loyal workforce. Apprentices who graduate can find work in good-paying jobs. The average annual wage in manufacturing occupations is over \$51,400, more than \$10,000 above the average annual wage for all occupations in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin's apprenticeship program was the first in the nation when it was signed into law in 1911. Since that time, Wisconsin has trained thousands of apprentices in a wide variety of occupations. In 2012, Wisconsin had 9,608 apprentices training in over 200 occupations, including 4,832 working in construction, 1,689 in industrial and manufacturing trades, and 3,087 in the service industry.

Even so, Secretary Newson noted that the outreach initiative is designed to engage even more employers to take advantage of the program and to help turn around a decline in employer participation that has been seen nationally and in Wisconsin over the past decade.

As part of Governor Walker's commitment to Wisconsin Apprenticeship, his 2013–15 budget proposal includes permanent state funding for Wisconsin's apprenticeship program and the Veterans in Piping program, a pre-apprenticeship training program for veterans that results in second-year apprentice status and guaranteed apprenticeship placement upon graduation.

DWD partnered with Laughlin Constable, a regional advertising agency and the primary vendor for the state Department of Tourism, to invest in the comprehensive education and outreach effort to build interest in the apprenticeship program.

For more information, visit [www.WisconsinApprenticeship.org](http://www.WisconsinApprenticeship.org).